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REMARKS

Filed concurrently herewith is a request for a one-month extension of time which extends the shortened statutory period for response to July 23, 2004. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Applicants' response is being timely filed.

In the Examiner's action dated March 23, 2004 has been received and its contents carefully noted. In view thereof, claims 1-4 have been canceled in their entirety without prejudice nor disclaimer of the subject matter set forth therein. Claims 5, 8 and 10-12 have been amended and new claim 14 has been added in order to better define that which Applicants regard as the invention. Accordingly, claims 5-14 are presently pending in the instant application.

Initially, Applicants wish to acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claims 5-7 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Further, it is noted that claims 8-13 have been indicated as being allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph set forth in the Office Action and to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

As can be seen from the foregoing amendments, previous dependent claim 5 has been amended to include all the limitations of previous independent claim 1. Moreover, this claim has been amended in order to overcome the objection raised by the Examiner on page 2 of the Office Action. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Applicants' claimed invention as set forth in independent claim 5 as well as those claims which depend therefrom, is now in proper condition for allowance.

With reference now to the Official Action, particularly page 2 thereof, the disclosure has been objected to as including minor informalities. As can be seen from the foregoing amendments, the specification has been amended in order to cure those informalities noted by the Examiner. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Applicants' specification is now in proper formal condition for allowance.

With reference to paragraph 2 of the Office Action, claims 3 and 5-13 have been objected to as including minor informalities. Again, as can be seen from the foregoing amendments, claim 3 has been canceled and claims 5, 9, 11 & 12 have been amended in order

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to overcome the informalities noted by the Examiner. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 5-13 are now in proper formal condition for allowance.

With reference now to paragraph 4 of the Office Action, claims 2-4 and 8-13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. In this regard, as can be seen from the foregoing amendments, claims 2-4 have been canceled and claim 8 has been amended in order to properly depend from independent claim 5. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 8-13 are now in proper formal condition for allowance.

Referring now to paragraph 6 of the Office Action, claims 1 and 2 as best understood have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Japanese Patent Publication 58-199217. This rejection is respectfully traversed in that the Japanese Patent Publication neither discloses nor suggest that which is presently set forth by Applicants claimed invention.

Specifically, as can be seen from the foregoing amendments, claims 1 and 2 have been canceled in their entirety and consequently further discussion with respect to the rejection thereof is no longer believed to be warranted.

With reference to paragraph 7 of the Office Action, claims 1, 2 and 4 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Japanese Patent Publication 63-222922. Likewise, this rejection is respectfully traversed in that claims 1, 2 and 4 have been canceled in their entirety without prejudice nor disclaimer of the subject matter set forth therein. Accordingly, further discussion with respect to the merits of this rejection is no longer believed to be warranted.

With reference now to paragraph 9 of the Office Action, claim 3 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shinjo et al. in view of Japanese Patent Publication 58-199217. Again, in that claim 3 has been canceled in its entirety without prejudice nor disclaimer of the subject matter set forth therein, further discussion with respect to the merits of this rejection is no longer believed to be warranted.

As to new claim 14, this claim is dependent on independent claim 5 and is likewise believed to be in proper condition for allowance for the reasons discussed hereinabove.

Therefore, in view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the objections and


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rejections of record be reconsidered and withdrawn by the Examiner, that claims 5-14 be allowed and that the application be passed to issue.

Should the Examiner believe a conference would be of benefit in expediting the prosecution of the instant application, he is hereby invited to telephone counsel to arrange such a conference.

Respectfully submitted,



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